The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 45, Vol. iv.] BELFAST, SEPTEMBER, 1st, 1884. [For Gratuitous Circulation

THE Rev. J. C. Street begs to acknowledge the following contribution in aid of the publication and gratuitous circulation of the *Chronicle and Index*:—Mrs. Watson, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 10/-.

DEATH has been very busy in our ministerial ranks of late. The last who, so far, has fallen on the battle-field is the Rev. David Maginnis, of Stourbridge. His name will always be best known in Ireland as one of the most conspicuous of the uncompromising band of Liberals who resisted all attempts to impose shackles on our Churches, or compel anything like uniformity of belief among ministers or people. Subjected to cruel persecution and misrepresentation, he manfully held his own against great and powerful opponents, and established his reputation as a fearless thinker, a close reasoner, and a bold speaker. The forces arrayed against him were numerous and persistent, but he fought his battle bravely. After leaving Belfast he went to Stourbridge, in England, where he won for himself an honoured place, and maintained to the close of his life an unsullied reputation. His name will ever be held in great respect both in Ireland and England.

OUR vacant pulpits in Ireland are becoming a source of anxiety to the friends of free religious thought. Ballee, Killinchy, Templepatrick, Ballyclare and Clonmel are all without ministers, and now we hear that Moneyrea may be added to the number. Death has caused the vacancies at all the places except Moneyrea. Mr. Rylett has resigned, and his congregation has accepted his resignation. We hope soon to hear that fit and faithful men have been found to fill the vacant places.

WE beg to commend to our readers the appeal made in our advertising columns by the "Douglas" Church. We know that the case is a good one and thoroughly deserving of support. The Rev. J. C. Street will be glad to forward any contributions that may be entrusted to him.

WE are glad to notice that the Rev. Joseph Wood, formerly Congregational minister at Leicester, has entered upon his duties as minister of the Old Meeting at Birmingham, in succession to the Rev. Charles Clarke. We hope he may have a successful ministry and find himself thoroughly at home among his Unitarian friends.

FRIENDS of the Rev. R. Cowley Smith, who for a time laboured in connection with the Hopeton Street Mission, will be interested to hear that he has received and accepted an invitation to become minister of the Hartington Street Chapel, Buxton, and that he will enter upon his duties there in October.

MR. STEINTHAL'S sermon on the death of Rev. Wm. Gaskell has been published by the Committee of Cross Street Chapel. It is a tender and affectionate tribute, and is marked by a wise and judicious estimate of the character, ability, and influence of the venerable pastor.

THE Wesleyans are troubled by the "Spirit of the Age." Their preachers are going beyond the teachings of John Wesley and questioning some of the doctrines which he set forth with unquestioning faith. Just at present they are silencing one of their ministers and receiving the resignation of another, because these gentlemen no longer believe in the eternal punishment of the wicked. The waters of free thought are making their way through the embankments of creeds, and there is little

doubt that the strong tide will speedily sweep the obstructions away.

THERE is a great crisis in the affairs of the Brahmo Somaj. The death of Chunder Sen has emphasized the differences between the pure Theists, and those who are fond of symbolism and are adopting superstitious observances. Mr. Mozoomdar is trying to bring about a union, but his efforts seem unavailing. His numerous friends in the West look to him with hopefulness, and will gladly hail from his lips words of clear import. They count upon him proving faithful to the spirit of Rammahun Roy, and the best utterances of Chunder Sen. Not backward, but forward must be his motto.

Since writing the above we have received the following from the *Indian Messenger;*—

Fire has been at last publicly opened by Mr. Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar on the Durbar party, who have finally entrenched themselves behind their doctrine of inspiration. On Saturday before last Mr. Mozoomdar delivered a public lecture on "The Present Crisis in the Brahmo Somaj." The *Liberal* [the organ of the Keshub Chunder Sen party] complains that the "statement was strongly worded," and that "the whole blame was thrown upon his opponents." All that is natural. It only shows the wide gulf caused by personal feelings and theological bigotry between the parties. Now that Mr. Mozoomdar has laid his charge before the public, and has irrevocably removed the possibility of any probable reconciliation, all eyes are waiting to see what steps he would take for the consolidation of his party and also for the recovery of the Mandir. In the meantime the cause of Brahmoism, which is still associated with that of the New Dispensation in the public mind, is being daily weakened by these internal dissensions.

A VERY interesting Missionary Anniversary and Conference was held at South Shields on Sunday and Monday, August 3rd and 4th. The preachers of the sermons were the Revs. W. H. LAMBELLE, of South Shields, and J. C. STREET, of Belfast. The Conference on important missionary topics, which was attended by representatives from South Shields, Newcastle, Darlington, Sunderland, Barnard Castle, Choppington, and other places, was of a most interesting nature, and the fire of a living earnestness burned brightly through all the proceedings.

After the Conference, which was of a most successful character, a tea meeting was held, followed by a public meeting held in the Church, and largely attended by friends from South Shields, Newcastle, Sunderland, Barnard Castle, &c.

The CHAIRMAN, Mr. George Lucas, said some of them had been engaged during the morning and afternoon in considering in what way they could promote the religious work of their congregations. It would be admitted they could not have been better employed. There was a spirit of inquiry and activity in their churches, which gave them some confidence to think that they were a progressive religious denomination in the North of England. It was most important to the life of their churches that there should be oneness of religious feeling, a sympathetic spirit, and a high practical object before them. This, he thought, they at present recognised. If he interpreted the state of the churches rightly, they had all reached this conclusion, that the theological element, however harmonious they might be concerning it, was not the first thing in point of importance to place before our congregations. He did not, however, mean that theological questions had to be laid aside, for there were special occasions on which they ought to be placed in a prominent position. The present moment, for example, presented a fitting opportunity for calling attention to the awful and false doctrine of eternal life in torments, the action of the Wesleyan Conference respecting the Rev. Mr. Frankland forcing attention to this belief. They could not afford to hide under a bushel their theological views.

Mr. J. GLENDINING, in eulogistic terms, then moved:—"That this meeting rejoices in the presence of the Rev. J. C. Street, and tenders its hearty thanks to him for his attendance at this Conference and for his services yesterday.

The resolution was cordially seconded by Mr. T. Hornby, and carried by acclamation.

The Rev. J. C. Street, on rising to respond, was received with loud applause. They had conferred on him a great pleasure in asking him to be present at those proceedings. The call to the North of England was always a pleasant call, and he thanked them cordially for the opportunity of being amongst them. That he was interested in South Shields and in missionary work was well known. He had come with a great deal of interest to see what the state of affairs was. The number of young people connected with the South Shields Church had struck him; it was a very promising and gratifying sight. They had thanked him for being present at the Conference that day. A more practical, straight-forward meeting he was never at. He had been asked that night to say a few words upon the tendencies of religious thought outside Unitarian Churches. The Unitarian church had always been a progressive Church. It had never said, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further." It had always said, "Speak with us, Lord, Thyself reveal;" and the Unitarian Church had always dared to go forward and speak to the world what God had given it. When their chairman and he some twenty years ago went into the fight against what they deemed to be error they found a compact series of organisations against them. Within those twenty years which have elapsed since he first came to the North of England, great changes had taken place. They had not to fight the same battles. It was only now and again they had to put forward their old statements in conflict with the Churches of the day. There had taken place during the last twenty-five years one of the most extraordinary revolutions the world had ever seen. The old doctrines were gone. Even Scotland, where Presbyterianism was so strong, was completely honeycombed with theological doubt. The old doctrines of Calvinism were dead; and there only needed some great spiritual reformer to rise within the ranks of the Church of Scotland, and there would be in the life-time of some of those present that day a spiritual revolution of the most startling character the world had ever seen. Ireland was, perhaps, the last stronghold of theological bigotry in Christendom. This spirit in the country was represented by the Roman Catholic Church and by the theology of Geneva, which Geneva had cast out, but which had been taken up by Ulster. But even in Ulster they were beginning to realise the fact that if they did not begin to revise their creeds they would soon be looked upon as fossils that did not belong to the life of the present. Their chairman had referred to an incident in the Wesleyan Conference. Wesleyanism had by this action given way one step; for in by-gone years they would have cast the offender out of the Church. Wesleyanism had shifted its ground in doing this; and in the face of the world they had confessed there was a development going on they dare not cast out. The progress of the world was with them, and the day was dawning when the senses of men would be free. Mr. Street resumed his seat amid loud applause.

The Rev. W. H. Lambelle spoke on the Unitarian Church in its relation to other Churches; the Rev. J. Lee on practical preaching; Mr. Felix Taylor on religious zeal; the Rev. J. C. Pollard on our young people. The Rev. M. Ringrose, Messrs. J. Downey, P. Robson, F. C. Slater, W. Burnett, S. Pescod, and T. Manning, also addressed the meeting, which was brought to a close in the customary manner. During the evening the choir of the church, under the direction of Mr Yeeles, rendered some anthems in a highly satisfactory manner; Miss Robertson presiding at the organ.

My mind was ruffled with small cares to-day,
And I said pettish words, and did not keep
Long-suffering patience well; and now how deep
My trouble for this sin! In vain I weep
For foolish words I never can unsay.

Yet I shall learn at last; though I neglect,
Day after day, to seek my help from Thee.
Oh, aid me, that I always recollect
This gentle-heartedness; and, oh, correct
Whatever else of sin thou seest in me!

—*Henry Septimus Sutton.*

In ten pleasant chapters Miss F. E. Cooke has told "The Story of Dr. Channing" for young people, and has produced a book as

entertaining as it is useful and inspiring. Miss Cooke's story of "Theodore Parker," as well as her "Latimer's Candle," proved her capacity to clothe great lives with such attractiveness for young minds that any new book from her pen would be sure to be looked for with great interest. In this new book 'Channing' is made to live again. He is no longer merely a great writer and preacher, but a winsome, attractive boy, a patient and earnest student, a crystal-minded and heroic man—and the incidents of his life are narrated with such sweetness and simplicity that the reader follows the story with unabated interest from beginning to end. Many a youth and maiden rising from the perusal of this pleasing volume will be eager to continue the study and learn every thing that can be told of the great and good Dr. Channing. The Sunday School Association has enriched its series of books by this publication, and Miss Cooke has conferred a new obligation upon her numerous young friends. The volume is handsomely bound and printed, and is very cheap.

MR. F. W. NEWMAN'S latest work, entitled, "Christianity in its Cradle," is sure to arrest, as it certainly deserves, the attention of all classes of thinkers both in and out of the Christian Church. It is worthy of careful study, and will stimulate many to commence new enquiries into the origin of Christianity. We commend its study to our young people especially. It is a noble legacy from an old prophet to a new generation.

MR. A. D. TYSSEN has printed, and is gratuitously circulating, the "Annotated Catechism, 1884: being the Reformed Catechism, 1883, with Annotations." It is a most valuable Catechism of religion and morality. Its notes are, for the most part, wise and judicious, though exception might be taken to one or two of them. But the general scope of the little book is excellent, and its spirit and philosophy are in keeping with all that is highest and best. In a brief preface Mr. Tyssen says, "free leave is given to any person to reprint or adapt in any way the whole or any portion of this book. No copyright should be claimed in religion and morality." We heartily approve of these sentiments, and shall be glad from time to time to give to our readers extracts from this valuable manual. If Mr. Tyssen would care to send copies to us we should be willing to place them in such hands as would be likely to turn them to the best account. In the meantime, we give the first two questions and answers, with the illustration of the writer, under the head of *Our Faith*.

1. *Q. You see the world and the great universe around you, and feel the powers of your mind within you,—what think you of these?*

A. I believe that the world and the great universe around me and my mind within me are the work of one great Being, of infinite power and perfect wisdom and goodness; and this great Being, the Creator of the universe and Author of my mind, I call God

2. Q. For what purpose do you imagine God has placed you in this world and endowed you with the powers of feeling and thinking and acting, which you feel you possess?

A. In order that, by properly exercising those powers in the condition in which He has placed me, I may fit myself for a higher and nobler life in a future state.

Our Faith.—The first two questions and answers state what is our faith. We contemplate the problem presented by the mystery of existence, and this is the answer which we give to it. We feel that this answer is not only the most reasonable, but the only reasonable answer which can be given. Considering all that we know, of our own consciousness and experience, of the records of history and the conclusions of science, it is reasonable to have faith in the mighty Power which has brought the universe into being, and made us what we are, and placed us where we find ourselves. It is reasonable to believe that all things have been made and are governed by one Supreme Being, and that, in picturing that Being as possessing the mightiest power, the deepest wisdom, and the most perfect goodness, which we can conceive, we shall approach the nearest that we may to regarding Him as He really is.

We rest our faith, then, on our own con-

sciousness of the nobility of our nature, a consideration of the wonders of science, and a persual of the records of history.

THE INDWELLING GOD.

The man who finds not God in his own heart will find him nowhere, and he who finds him there will find him everywhere. The reason why men are so often bewildered and disappointed in their search for God is that they do not look for him first of all where he should chiefly be sought,—in the manifestations he makes of himself in their own minds and hearts. They suffer the noises of the world to drown "the still, small voice" that never fails to rebuke them for wrong-doing, and never ceases to plead with them to keep in the path of righteousness and peace. That voice, whose utterances never fail, is the voice of God in the human soul, the primary revelation of the divine will, without which all written revelations would be vain. Before man can know or intelligently believe that God has spoken to others, he must at least have some dim consciousness that he has spoken to himself. By the message to himself, he instinctively and necessarily tries all other messages purporting to be divine, to determine whether they are so or not. If he misinterprets, as he may, the revelation of God to himself, that blunder must be corrected before he can rightly interpret any other revelation. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

The immanence of God in man is a truth which theologians too often overlook or utterly forget. Hence the confusion and contradiction in which they become involved. Man is regarded not merely as a wanderer from God, but as one forsaken by him, and to be redeemed, not through the operation of forces and influences provided for in his original constitution, but by some miraculous after-thought. We referred last week to an editorial article in a prominent religious journal, in which an attempt was made to show that man has not in himself any power of moral recuperation, and that, if it were not for the "objective atonement" provided by Christ, he would be hopelessly lost. The writer of the article seems to rejoice in expelling God from humanity for the mere pleasure of bringing him back again by the device of the atonement.

If by this it were only meant that man can do nothing of himself, but lives and moves and has his being in God, we should readily yield our assent. The recuperative forces of the body are provided of God, and attest his presence and power; and we maintain that the forces he employs for the recuperation of the soul wounded by sin are equally a part of the human constitution, not separate from it. Divine influences work upon the hearts of men by a natural and inflexible law. The sinner is never forsaken of God, who stands ready to forgive upon the first sign of penitence and reformation. The law of moral recuperation is as constant as the physical, and both are alike divine. The doctrine of an "objective atonement" is only a disturbance in the operation of natural laws, inducing false hopes and putting men in artificial relations with God and with one another.

That God dwells in men is a truth alike fundamental and consoling. That he is ever "working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure," warning us from evil and drawing us ever to himself, inviting us perpetually to a feast of love and spiritual delight in his presence, is a truth to which every right-minded soul will bear joyful witness. And, as God is mightier than man, truth more powerful than error, and holiness more to be desired than sin, we must believe that, in the course of time, either in this or some other world, through the corrective discipline of spiritual and moral law every sinner will be reclaimed. —*Christian Register*.

HE LEADS US ON.

He leads us on
By paths we did not know.
Upward he leads us, though our steps be slow;
Though oft we faint and falter on the way,
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day,
Yet, when the clouds are gone,
We know he leads us on.

He leads us on
Through all the unquiet years;
Past all our dreamland hopes and doubts and fears
He guides our steps. Through all the tangled maze
Of sin, of sorrow, and o'erclouded days,
We know his will is done;
And still he leads us on.

And he, at last,
After the weary strife,
After the restless fever we call life,
After the dreariness, the aching pain,
The wayward struggles which have proved in vain,
After our toils are past,
Will give us rest at last.

—*Golden Hours.*

THE following is being circulated among ministers as a suggested

"SERVICE OF BENEDICTION OF CHILDREN AND THANKSGIVING BY PARENTS, FOR USE AT CHURCH OR AT HOME."

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER.

Dear Friends,—The parents of this child desire me to say that they do not attribute any superstitious effect to the rite of baptism, or imagine that aught that any human being can do or say can make an innocent, sinless little babe one whit more a child of God than God himself hath made it. But they ask me to baptize their child, because they regard the Christian institution of baptism as the mode, sanctioned by law and custom, whereby parents give a prename to a child, and declare their intention to train it in the principles of religion. And they ask me to conduct a religious service on this occasion, to show their thankfulness to God for the blessing He has given them, to be reminded of the duties which parents owe to their children, and to pray to God for grace and strength that they may perform those duties faithfully. Let us commence our service, then, by hearing the words of wisdom and love which have been handed down to us by devout men of old.

(Here some suitable passages should be read, such as the following.)

The Hundredth Psalm.

[*Being a song of thanksgiving.*]

From the Second Chapter of the Book of Proverbs, verses 1—9.

[*Setting forth the path of wisdom and safety for old and young.*]

From the Tenth Chapter of the Second Gospel, verses 13—16.

[*The benediction of Jesus.*]

ADDRESS

By the Minister, or the following Statement may be read.

STATEMENT.

The law of our country requires parents to fulfil certain duties to their children.*

But human law is necessarily powerless to compel parents to perform all the manifold duties which the law of God requires them to perform to a tender little child, whom they have brought into the world. They may be sure that its birth is registered, so to speak, in the Book of God, and that it there appears that they are responsible for its welfare, both spiritual and temporal; that they owe it love and protection; that they are bound to guard it from every ill, to sacrifice their own pleasures for its sake, to train it in the fear of God, and to supply it, so far as they are able, with all things needful both for the body and the soul. And they may be sure that if they would train their child properly in the fear of God, they must let it see that they walk in the fear of God themselves. And as many people feel a natural diffidence of speaking of religious matters in their own words, they will do well not to neglect those formal religious acts which are sanctioned by custom amongst us, as a means whereby we testify to our faith in an all-wise and all-good God, who is both our Creator and our Judge.

After the Address or Statement, the Minister shall say:

I ask the parents of this child, therefore—

Will you faithfully and earnestly endeavour to instruct and train this child, by word and deed, by precept and example, in the love and service of God and of mankind?

The Parents. We will so endeavour.

The Minister. What name do you give to this child?

The Parents. X. Y.

The Minister. Do you intend the name of this child to recall the recollection of any persons living or departed, or do you ask any relatives or friends to be godfather or godmother to this child?

The Parents. We name the child
after
and we ask
to allow themselves to be called her godfather and godmother, in order to show the regard which we entertain for them.

PRAYER.

(From the Brahmo Namkaram Service.)

Minister. Let us pray. O merciful God, by whose grace and mercy we have come together to this naming ceremony to-day, shower Thy blessings on this tender, new-born soul. May this child grow in body and mind, and follow Thy path by Thy grace. Be Thou her guide and guardian, do Thou protect her from evil; be Thou her father and mother, and be Thy name glorified in her life.

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* We have omitted the legal requirements.

Minister. X. Y., I baptize thee with water, in the hope and with the prayer that thou mayst live and grow in the love and service of God and of mankind, and that God may baptize thee with His spirit, as He baptizes all who look to Him for guidance and sincerely strive to learn and to do His will.

And now may God bless thee, and strengthen thee, and guide thee into all truth, and make thee feel that underneath thee are the everlasting arms, now and for ever. Amen.

Let us pray.

PRAYER.

(From the Rev. C. Voysey's Service of Benediction of Children

We thank Thee, O Father, this day, for Thy bounty to these Thy servants, in adding the blessing of a child to the numberless good gifts which surround them. We thank Thee for hearing their prayers, and for granting their hearts' desire. May this precious gift draw their souls nearer to Thee and to each other; may new love grow out of this new delight, and may their instincts as parents unfold to them more and more of Thy all-fatherly love. Give them wisdom from on high to teach this child Thy truth, and help them with a heavenly strength to set her good and holy examples, that she may become a true and faithful champion of every good cause, and may steadfastly live to promote the welfare of mankind.

And be near at hand, O God of all consolation, to soothe their anxious souls when sin or suffering threatens to harm their child; and keep them ever ready to give her back to Thee with trustful hearts, if Thou shouldest see fit to call her before them to a brighter home. Amen.

(Here a further Prayer or Prayers may be added, according to the Minister's selection.)

BENEDICTION.

(From the Brahmo Namkaram Service.)

May God,—who sustains the universe by His benevolent power, who protects all beings with loving care and wisdom, who, as the Guide or Guardian of the human soul, will, through eternity, adorn and enrich it with true knowledge, and with love and holiness and joy, —hear the prayers which we offer on this sacred occasion, and may He bless this child. Amen.

THE charge so commonly made against Unitarianism, that it concerns itself chiefly with negations and has little to teach of a positive or affirmative character, either arises from a misrepresentation of the facts, or (as is generally the case) from a want of knowledge regarding them. Those who know the history of Unitarianism, which for centuries has been a history of martyrdom more or less acute, will know that the Unitarians have always been forced into a *Protestant* attitude. The power of the law has been against them until comparatively late years, and the force of numbers has always placed them at a disadvantage. Holding to the simplicity of the Gospel according to Jesus Christ himself, they have felt compelled to separate themselves, when they were not driven out, from the communities that had wandered far from original Christian teaching: they have simply obeyed the call to speak and live their protest against the popular corruptions, which have gradually impaired and hidden the truth as it was in Jesus.

But their negations have always been for the sake of their affirmations: they have denied in order to affirm. When they deny the theory of Biblical Infallibility, it is to maintain the true and abiding Worth of the Bible and preserve it from dangerous misunderstanding. When they deny the doctrine of a Fallen Humanity, it is to vindicate the Dignity of the Nature which a wise and loving God has given us to develop. When they deny the Substitutional Sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth to satiate the justice of an angry God and bear the burden of the sins of humanity, it is because they believe that God's justice is tempered with mercy and forgiveness, that a scheme of vicarious atonement is opposed to every canon of justice, and that every man must bear his own burden of sin and consequent suffering. When they deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, it is because they find no warrant for such a belief in history, and because, as the saintly type of what man may become, he stands forth in majesty as a kingly example to the children of men. When they deny the material Hell and the material Heaven, it is because their conceptions of the Future Life are too spiritual to permit of such gross elements, and they feel that punishment and reward hereafter must be simply spiritual consequences of spiritual conditions here. When they deny the existence of the Devil with his legion of bad angels, it is because they believe in the Omnipotence, Holiness, and Eternal Love of God, with which such a doctrine is inconsistent. When they deny the cruel doctrines of Predestination and Election, it is because they affirm the glorious truth of Free Will (limited of course by human conditions) and the free offer of salvation to all. And when they deny the Eternal Punishment of the wicked, it is because they believe with all their souls in the Infinite Mercy of "God our Saviour who *will have* ALL men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The accusation, therefore, so thoughtlessly or so falsely made against us, of denying merely for the sake of denial, will not be repeated by honourable men when they have once learnt the spirit by which we are guided. —*C. J. Street.*

THE BELFAST UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

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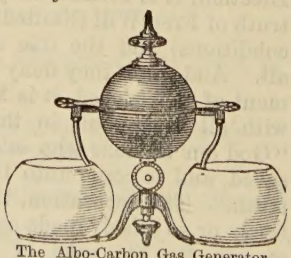

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We invite our friends to call and inspect the new Tracts and Books which are offered for sale at the Depository.

Contributions in aid of the *Chronicle and Index* will be gladly received and acknowledged by the Rev. J. C. STREET.

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